

LONELY NIHOA VISITED BY A SMALL EXPLORING PARTY

A Crusoe Island Inhabited by Tame Birds and Surrounded by Voracious Sharks---Cruise of the Steamer Mikahala.

M. H. A. JAEGER of Wahiawa, Kauai, having chartered the S. N. Co. steamer Mikahala, made a trip to Nihoa, or as it is more familiarly called Bird Island, one of the islands of the Hawaiian group, lying some 25 miles to the westward of Honolulu, organized a party to leave Kauai on the steamer on Saturday afternoon to make a trip to the island and return Monday.

The party consisted of the following: H. A. Jaeger, Allan Jaeger, Jno. Nevin, Mr. McCloud, Mr. Wagner, Nick Landers, George Klugel, W. H. Rice, Jr., W. Fisher, W. W. Chamberlain, L. W. Wainwright, N. Craig, Thos. Kimble, R. B. Church, R. J. Rice, Hugh Phelps, W. A. Ramsay, Geo. Herriot, P. K. K. A. Arswaldt, J. Jorgensen, M. A. May, Dr. Wilkinson, Dick Dias, Mr. Miller and two sons and the captain and purser of the Mikahala.

The party left Eleale, Kauai, about 7 o'clock in the afternoon, touching in at Makawili to pick up Dr. Wilkinson. From there it had a course so as to reach the island of Lihou, thence across to the island of Nihoa. The weather was pleasant although the sea was a little rough. As dawn broke the two peaks of the island were seen just ahead of the horizon. Gradually as the steamer drew nearer the island came plainly to view and appeared to be a rock rising abruptly from the ocean and about a mile in length by a quarter of a mile in width. On three sides the cliffs rise precipitously from the sea, while on the south side is a small bay, which appeared to be the only landing. The party made for this bay and reached the anchorage a little after 9 o'clock. The sea was somewhat rough and large swells came rolling in, making into spray against the rocks. Just as anchor was dropped a swarm of sharks came around the boat. Captain Gregory, after taking a careful survey of the bay and noting the possible landing places, decided to make a landing at a bluff somewhat sheltered from the swells of the ocean on the mauka side of the bay. On the makai side of the bay could be seen a short beach, possibly some 200 feet in length, but on account of the heavy swell and breakers it did not appear feasible to land on that side.

The first boat, containing Captain Gregory, Mr. Jaeger, Mr. Klugel and Mr. Chamberlain, put off from the steamer shortly before ten and made for the landing place selected by the captain. As they approached the huge waves rolled against the rocks, dashing into spray and rebounding with a strong undertow. The captain ordered the sailors to back water, and as the waves carried the boat to the rock the boatswain, grasping a rope in his hand, leaped ashore. Fastening this rope he made fast to the boat and with sailors backing water and the crew on shore pulling the boat gradually in, as the waves rose against the rocks, each member of the party leaped ashore.

The second boat, containing the major part of the party, and most of the baggage, came up shortly afterwards. The baggage was thrown ashore without trouble, being caught by those on the rocks above. Most of the passengers succeeded in landing without accident, although one or two, unused to the rough landing, and somewhat weakened by seasickness, unfortunately slipped into the water, but were saved by those on the rocks without more serious results than a drenching. Several persons followed in from the steamer to the shore and it would have been serious to anyone had he fallen overboard.

The sea appeared to be growing rougher and the captain decided that the passengers still on board should have no more baggage on account of the difficulty of landing. After the second boat, containing the balance of the party, had landed its passengers, the crew all climbed from the landing place up the cliffs on the hillside above. There they paused to make a survey of the island and decide where they should land. Around on all sides, darkening the air, were birds of all descriptions. From the point of observation on the mauka side of the island, the visitors could see every portion of Nihoa, and dividing into parties they decided to explore each party in separate directions.

The island is divided by several ravines or gullies. In the bottom of these ravines are lulu palms, a palm which the natives use in making hats very similar to the Panama hat. Several varieties of small shrubs grow in abundance all over the island, making an underbrush through which it is difficult to travel.

The bay of the land is such that it is almost impossible for deposits of guano to come down from the island as the rains pour into the ocean. On all sides, under the rocks, in the caves and on the rocky, were birds, large, small, white and spotted. The birds were the least afraid. They circled around in many cases attempted to fly in the face of the party. As the party traversed the island it was difficult to escape from the eggs and young ones. One of the exploring parties scaled the point of the island and the view there was well worth the hot and weary tramp. Said one of the explorers: "We stood and gazed down some 200 feet below us we could see the birds feeding around the rocks almost directly under our feet. The sky was clear

and for miles in every direction nothing could be seen but the endless expanse of the ocean and the thought struck us, what a terrible place it would be for shipwrecked mariners.

"There is very little water on the island. In the ravines can be found in the hollows of the rocks, small pools of water, but this water is so saturated with guano that it is impossible to use it for drinking purposes.

"There are on several parts of the island heiaus. These heiaus or stone enclosures must have been erected many years ago by natives visiting the island either for the purpose of sacrifice or for fishing. The dirt and guano have filled many of them so that nothing but the top of the stone wall is visible. In others can be seen slabs of stone, to all appearances erected for burial monuments or as altars. We explored these carefully, hoping to find some idols or images or possibly some works of the ancient visitors but were unable to find anything of that nature.

"Some members of our party brought shotguns and we shot quite a number of birds. These birds have two red feathers in their tails. These feathers were used by the ancient Hawaiians for making royal kahilis and are very rare. We succeeded in shooting quite a number of the birds and capturing feathers from a large number of the female birds sitting on their nests amidst the brush of the island. As we passed along through the brush, scattered all over were nests of some of the larger birds. These nests are made of shrunken interwoven and resting on the tops of the underbrush. Each female bird lays one egg, and hatches but one bird. These birds are about the size of an ordinary full grown fowl and are covered with a fuzz of snowy white or of gray according to the species of the bird and as you pass by them they snap their bills ferociously at you and if you were unfortunate enough to be caught in their grip, the mark would be a permanent reminder of the trip to the island. Among this underbrush live a large number of canaries very similar to the Laysan Island canary, only more gaudily feathered and a little smaller in size. We succeeded in capturing a few of these birds and brought them home with us. After thoroughly exploring the island we gathered under a group of lulu palms for lunch. Unfortunately, however, we found our supply of water had run out and many of us who had been separated from the main body of the party were almost dying of thirst, consequently we decided to make for the shore and signal the steamer to send a keg of water to us. After the water came and we had rested somewhat, we again divided, part of us going along the rocks at the base of the cliffs to explore the sand beach on the leeward side of the bay, the rest of us remaining near the landing place, amusing ourselves by bathing in the natural basins just within reach of the surf, or fishing from the cliffs. Fish abound in large numbers in the holes and caves skirting the island and it is very easy with a hook and line to secure a large number of them. We succeeded in capturing and landing a baby shark, some three feet in length.

"About half past four, we started to embark on our return to the steamer. The sea was running rather high and it was a ticklish job to reach the shore in a boat without damage to it. However, through the careful and efficient management of Captain Gregory, we all succeeded in reaching the boat in safety and without mishap.

"Those of our party who had been too sea-sick to make the trip ashore, remained on the vessel and some of them amused themselves by catching sharks. During the morning several sharks varying in length from four to six feet were caught. Their fins and tails were chopped off and they were then thrown overboard. In the afternoon a shark some fourteen feet in length was captured and when his stomach was cut open it was found to contain two of the small sharks which had been captured in the morning and whose fins and tails had been cut off. The large shark had evidently swallowed them as they were lying nearly side by side in the stomach of the shark, intact, and just in front of them was the body of a seabird shot by some member of our party.

"After hoisting up the boats we made a circuit of the island. Through one side of the island there extends a cave large enough to allow a boat to row through, provided the weather was calm and it is possible for one to look through, seeing water on the other side. This island appears to have been thrown up from the bottom of the sea by some volcanic force and in that action to have been split into many sections, these sections being filled up with molten lava which has cooled up into solid rock and shows in vertical layers from base to summit, whereas the sections between are in horizontal layers.

"We left the island for Eleale, Kauai, about twenty minutes to six Sunday evening and sighted the islands of Niihau and Lihou about 8 o'clock Monday morning. The captain very kindly took us between these two islands on our way back to Eleale. The island of Lihou is said to be inhabited by a tribe of rabbits, however, as it is separated from the island of Nihoa by an expanse of water it is hardly necessary for the police to take cognizance of this fact.

"We reached Eleale about a quarter to four Monday afternoon after enjoying a very novel and exciting experience. Most of the party were a little sea-sick; some few of them were unable to visit the island at all on account of the effects of the rough passage. All appreciated the attention and kindness shown to us by the genial 'Irish Admiral' Gregory."

This island was visited by a party some fifteen years ago, among them were Governor Dole, Queen Liliuokalani, Mr. A. Jaeger and Mr. W. W. Hall. Since then no one has visited the place until this present trip.

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AN HAWAIIAN REGULAR.



HAWAIIANS will make model soldiers," said Adjutant General Soper yesterday. Continuing, he said: "I have found men among them whom I would as soon have with me in a tight place as any man of any race I ever have met."

The suggestion of Inspector General Breckenridge that there be enlisted a battalion of Hawaiian infantry for service in these Islands was the topic of conversation in many places yesterday, and the comment without exception was that the suggestion was timely and the action on the part of the Government would do much to make the people love the flag and cultivate a feeling of patriotism. The history of the Hawaiian in the armed demonstrations of the past shows that there is stolidism and loyalty for a leader in whom the people have confidence, all of which would go to prove that there would be no better soldiers under the Stars and Stripes than those enlisted here.

The record of the Hawaiians in service, as shown by the reports from the Philippines, has been excellent. Of the number of Hawaiians who went out from this city during the first days of the war with Spain the large majority have shown remarkable aptitude for the work. Of the number, one has earned a commission from the ranks, and almost every other one of the entire number has been promoted. There are sergeants and corporals, while the men transferred to the other lines, like service with the commissary and quartermaster's departments, have shown fidelity to the service which has made them remarked by their superior officers.

General Soper continued: "There might be some of the men who would show a reluctance for the hard work and rigorous discipline which would mark their service in the regular army, for their membership in the militia does not give any line upon their forbearance. As drillmen they stand at the front. They take a great pride in maintaining a soldierly appearance and they are always ready for the general light work of the militia. Should the men be picked there would be assembled a body of men who would reflect credit upon the army. The Hawaiians are large men as a rule, splendid of physique and of great endurance. They stand pain with stoic fortitude, and in a tight place they are level-headed and courageous.

"As showing their strength of will, during the row of 1889, while I was marshal, I was notified that there was a man down stairs who had been brought in from the palace. I went down and saw him sitting on the bench, seemingly simply downcast over the failure of the rebellion. I investigated and found that a bullet had passed through his hand and then through his thigh; yet he bore that pain without flinching, and when I ordered that he be sent to the hospital he showed no sign that he needed the attention, in his own opinion.

"As one of the examples of the bravery and capacity of the Hawaiian, William Kamana, the deputy jailer, is striking. I had him with me on the Ookala plantation and there he showed that he was ready for any emergency and often took part in battles which required all the skill and courage of any man. He never failed me and after I came here as marshal he came with me and went on the police force, and there the same characteristics displayed themselves. He is a giant and has proved himself equal to any emergency which has arisen in the past. Could men of that stamp be secured for the service they would make a fine showing and the army might well be proud of them.

"There would be many young men who would seek a career in the army who would develop such soldierly qualities that they would have the best claim upon any commissions from the ranks, and without doubt there would be as fine non-commissioned officers in such a battalion as in the army. I thoroughly approve of anything which will make the Hawaiian people self-reliant, bring them in contact with the best elements of the American service and make for their wider Americanism. Once let the people find that they are an integral part of the American people and I believe that there will be no trouble at any time in the future with discontent, and that there will be a degree of patriotism which will be most gratifying to all of the well-wishers of Hawaii."

Senator William White of Lahaina was in the best humor over the turn which has come, which in his opinion justifies all his efforts for the maintenance of the Hawaiian National Guard. He thinks that the results which would follow this move would be most beneficial and that the young men would be glad to enter the service and work for the promotions which they could earn. As showing the tendency of the times, he said that there would be an application for permission to organize a company of the National Guard at Lahaina, as there is much feeling for the service in the Maui city.

"The Hawaiian always was a warrior," said Mr. White, "and the young men of today would prove to be as good soldiers as any men in the United States. They are hardy, willing to work and eager to make the best showing. The experience of the police shows that they will meet danger and face odds with the greatest courage. I have seen three lanas, back to back, hold off a mob of Orientals until the arrival of the police, some of them wounded, but indifferent to suffering, only protecting the property of their employers. They would make as fine men as the army has in any of its regiments and the officers which are sent here would be able to make a model battalion. The Hawaiian is peculiar, and must be treated with consideration; yet he will submit to the most rigid discipline, and will work as hard as any other man in the world."

Delegate Wilcox is of the opinion that there will be much good come from the enlistment of such a force and says he will do all in his power to bring it about.

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